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SOVIET COMMENT ON THE POLITICAL CONVENTIONS
AND THE REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC NOMINEES

The Conventions and the U.S. Political System

Soviet and other bloc propaganda on the party conventions has accorded with the standard communist portrayal of U.S. elections as contests between "monopolist" parties whose candidates are bound to be unrepresentative of the people. Comment on both conventions has charged, routinely, that the candidates and platforms were selected behind the scenes, in "smoke-filled rooms," with delegates allowed only to rubber-stamp the decisions of their bosses. The stress on such charges has been about the same as in past election years. The amount of comment--less than one percent of Radio Moscow's total comment on all subjects--has also been about the same.

The Opposition versus the Administration Ticket

Moscow has been unqualified in its condemnation of the Republican ticket, headed by a long-standing target of Soviet attack. It has been equally categorical in denouncing Senator Johnson. It has, however, adopted something of a wait-and-see attitude toward Senator Kennedy, indicative of an intention to play up his criticisms of Administration foreign and military policies while condemning any manifestations of a "cold war" philosophy. During past campaigns Moscow has similarly exploited the anti-Administration statements of the candidates representing the party out of power. This time its ambivalence toward the major anti-Administration candidate is somewhat more marked than in the past three Presidential

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campaigns--but it should be recalled that in 1948 and 1952 Moscow was backing the Progressive Party against both major parties, and that in 1956, still relatively cordial toward President Eisenhower personally, it was about equally critical of both tickets.

The Democratic Nominees: Radio Moscow's assessment of the Democratic convention has implied that the results were not as bad as they might have been: If the best of the available candidates, Stevenson, was defeated, so were the worst candidates--"worst" on the basis of their "cold war" records--Johnson and Symington, Kennedy's alleged criticism of U.S. "adventurism" and intention to appoint Stevenson Secretary of State were points cited in his favor. Moscow's only major press comment so far (in IZVESTIA on 15 July) was more noncommittal, charging that "to this day [Kennedy] has not expressed his opinions on any burning international problem."

Johnson's nomination as Vice President has been deplored on the grounds that he "wholly endorses" the present Administration's foreign policy.

The Republican Nominees: Moscow has denounced the Republican ticket as one headed by figures "fully and entirely connected with Washington's present political course" of war preparations. Vice President Nixon's "big business" connections and "particularly conservative" views have been assailed in home and foreign broadcasts--although not to a much greater extent than has been Moscow's practice for many years.

The Rockefeller-Nixon accord has drawn derogatory comment. Ignoring its nondefense aspects, broadcasts have claimed that the Vice President made "concessions" to Rockefeller's demands for a stepped-up arms race. Ambassador Lodge's candidacy was sharply assailed on 30 July by KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA and SOVIET RUSSIA, both of which charged that he has been peddling "lies" and "slander" at U.N. meetings.

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